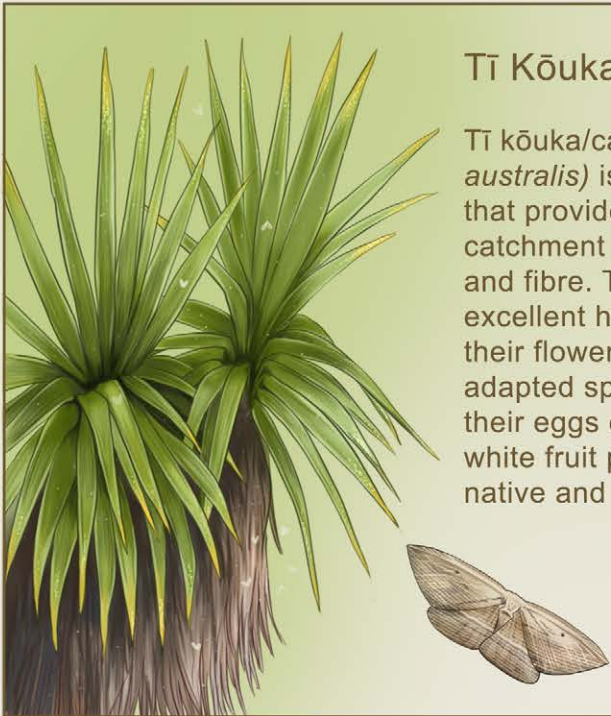


Biodiversity of the Lower Taiari River Catchment



Ti Kōuka | Cabbage Tree

Ti kōuka/cabbage tree (*Cordyline australis*) is a highly regenerative species that provided early Māori in the Taiari catchment with food (kāuru), medicine, and fibre. Their skirts of dead leaves are excellent habitats for moths who pollinate their flowers. The cabbage tree moth has adapted specific camouflage and only lays their eggs on ti kōuka. The purple and white fruit produced is widely eaten by native and non-native birds.

Cabbage tree moth (*Epiphyryne verriculata*)
Not Threatened

Mātātā | South Island Fernbird

Mātātā/South Island fernbirds are widely distributed through out the South Island but their populations are fragmented. In the Taiari Catchment they prefer the densely vegetated wetlands of the Waipōuri-Waihora Wetland Complex, but have been recorded in inland scrubland. They scramble through plants staying hidden eating insects, seeds and even skinks. Their small wings typically only allow flight for short distances and they rarely move beyond 800 metres.

Mātātā | South Island fernbird (*Poodytes punctatus punctatus*)
At Risk - Declining

Waipōuri-Waihora/Waipori-Waihola Wetland Complex

The Waipōuri-Waihora Wetland Complex is shaped by two shallow lakes, Waipōuri/Waipori (220 ha) and Waihora/Waihola (640 ha) which are connected by lagoons, vegetated islands, and agricultural channels. This wetland complex is a hotspot for native waterfowl. Pūtakitaki/paradise ducks, pārerā/grey ducks, tātā/tētē-moroi/grey teal, kukupako/pāpango/NZ scaup, and tātā/kuruwhegi/NZ shovellers all rely on the health of these wetlands. The lakes feed into the Waipōuri/Waipori River and then the Taiari River which continues on its journey to meet the ocean.

Tātā | Kuruwhegi | Australasian shoveler (*Spatula rhynchotis*)
Not Threatened



Kākāriki | Yellow-crowned parakeet (*Cyanoramphus auriceps*)
At Risk - Relict

Kākāriki | Red-crowned parakeet (*Cyanoramphus novaeseelandiae*)
At Risk - Relict

Kākāriki

The yellow-crowned kākāriki, although rare, can be found in some forested areas in Coastal Otago. Yellow-crowned kākāriki prefer tall, unbroken forest and scrub. The red-crowned kākāriki was widespread throughout the South Island last century but today is very rare on the mainland and only common on islands free of mammalian predators.

Kōparapara | Korimako | Bellbird (*Anthornis melanura*)
Not Threatened



Harakeke | New Zealand flax (*Phormium tenax*)
Not Threatened

Kōkō | Tūtū (*Prothemadera novaeseelandiae*)
Not Threatened



Pikiraki | Korukoru | Scarlet mistletoe (*Peraxilla colensoi*)
At Risk - Declining

Okaoka | Ongaonga | Tree Nettle

Growing up to 3 metres tall with a stem 12 cm in thickness, okaoka/ongaonga/tree nettle is the most formidable nettle in the world. If brushed against, the pale needles inject a painful toxin that may itch and burn. Because of its painful sting, okaoka/ongaonga/tree nettle has been removed from forest margins and rural and urban areas but this has led to a decline in kahukura/red admiral butterflies who exclusively lay their eggs on this plant. Kahukōwhai/yellow admirals are more common as they can use any nettle species as a host.

Kahukōwhai | Yellow admiral (*Vanessa itea*)

Kahukura | Red admiral (*Vanessa gonerilla gonerilla*)

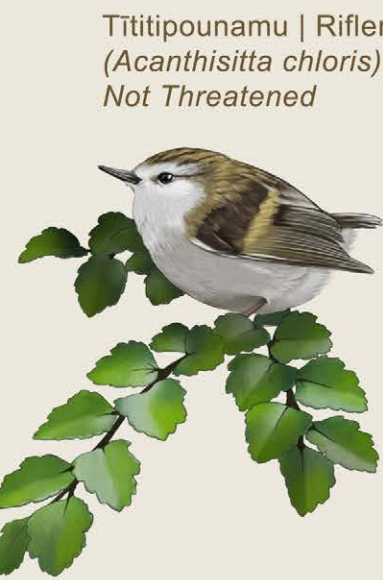


Okaoka | Ongaonga | Tree nettle (*Urtica ferox*)
Not Threatened

Titipounamu | Rifleman

Titipounamu/rifleman are the smallest birds in Aotearoa New Zealand at just six grams. In the Taiari Catchment, they can be found in the tawhai/tawhai rauriki/silver beech forests surrounding the Waipōuri/Waipori River, the valley of the Taiari River near Outram, and the mixed forest/plantations of the Silverstream Valley. Titipounamu flit from tree to tree, scaling the trunks and nipping at small insects, making them difficult to spot. Their call is so high-pitched, some people can't hear it at all. Although they are prolific nesters, pest control efforts significantly increase nest success.

Tititipounamu | Rifleman (f) (*Acanthisitta chloris*)
Not Threatened

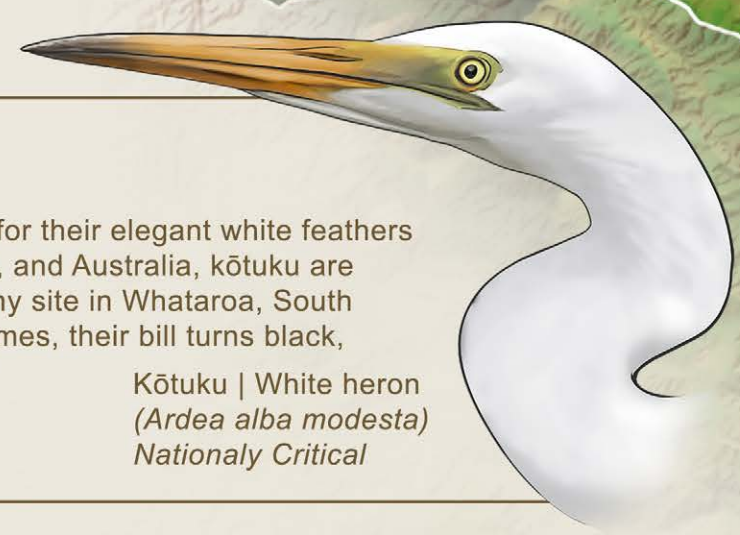


Tawai | Tawhai rauriki | Silver beech (*Lophozonia menziesii*)
Regionally Not Threatened

Kōtuku | White Heron

Kōtuku/white heron is well-loved by all in Aotearoa New Zealand for their elegant white feathers and graceful stature. Although common in the South Pacific, Asia, and Australia, kōtuku are seldom seen in Aotearoa New Zealand and only nest at one colony site in Whataroa, South Westland. During breeding seasons, they grow long breeding plumes, their bill turns black, and the skin around their eyes turns blue-green. Males stand tall flaring their plumage and snapping their bills to attract partners.

Kōtuku | White heron (*Ardea alba modesta*)
Nationally Critical



Pūteketeke | Australasian Crested Grebe

Pūteketeke are a distinctive diving bird known for their courtship displays which include "standing" on water while sharing pond weed. Pūteketeke controversially won Bird of the Century in 2023 with an astounding 290,374 votes due to a publicity boost by the comedian John Oliver. In the 1980s, the pūteketeke population dropped to 200 in the South Island, and while their population has recovered significantly, they are still vulnerable to predation.

Pūteketeke | Australasian crested grebe (*Podiceps cristatus australis*)
Regionally Threatened - Vulnerable



Matuku Moana | White-faced Heron

Matuku moana naturally introduced themselves to Aotearoa New Zealand in the 1940s from Australia. They are now widespread throughout the country. They meander rocky shores and aka/estuaries and taikoraha/mudflats in search of fish, crabs, and molluscs, but can also be found at lake edges and ponds.

Matuku moana | White-faced heron (*Egretta novaehollandiae*)
Not Threatened



Pāpango | New Zealand Scaup

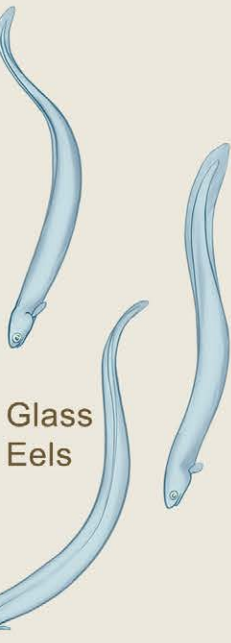
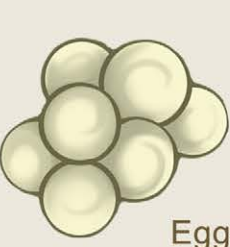
Pāpango/New Zealand scaup are diving ducks widely but unevenly distributed across Aotearoa New Zealand. While uncommon in Central Otago, they are often seen in flocks at the Waipōuri-Waihora Wetland Complex. Pāpango are small but excellent at diving underwater, swimming as deep as three metres for freshwater invertebrates and plant material to eat.

Pāpango | New Zealand scaup (*Aythya novaeseelandiae*)
Not Threatened



Tuna Migration

Both long and shortfin tuna/eels are taoka and live in the rivers and lakes of the Taiari Catchment. Tuna begin life in the Pacific Ocean near Tonga, emerging from eggs as translucent larvae. The larvae are too small to swim, but are carried by ocean currents to estuaries along the coasts of Aotearoa New Zealand. They develop into glass eels, accumulating in large numbers before swimming up river mouths. As they climb over waterfalls and rocks, they grow into elvers. Longfin eels live in freshwater streams for up to 90 years and shortfin up to 60 before changing to a dark silver colour and migrating back to the Pacific Ocean where millions of eggs are laid by females and fertilized by males, completing the cycle.



Migratory Adult

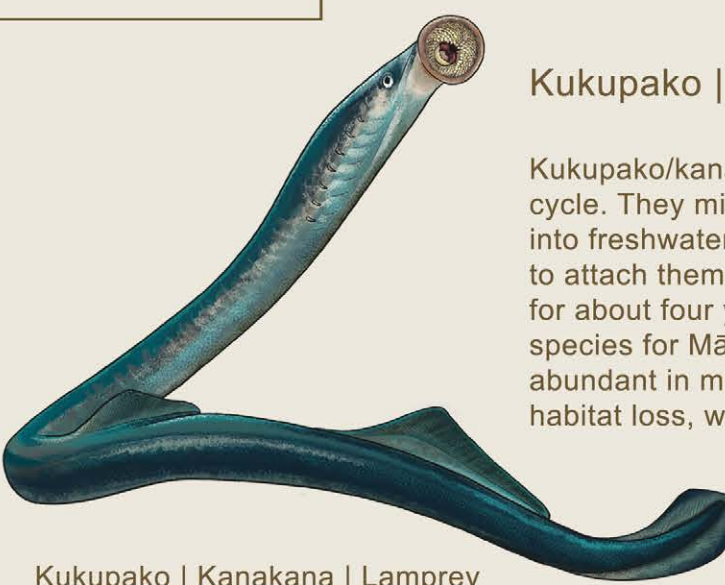


Elver/Adult

*Not to Scale

Kukupako | Kanakana | Lamprey

Kukupako/kanakana/lamprey are a primitive and jawless fish with a unique life cycle. They migrate like tuna, but spend most of their lives at sea, and only move into freshwater river systems to spawn. At sea kukupako use their suction mouth to attach themselves to large animals like whales and sharks, feeding as parasites for about four years before returning to coastlines. Kukupako are a mahika kai species for Māori and an important traditional food. In the past, these fish were abundant in many South Island rivers but today they are less common due to habitat loss, water quality issues, trout predation, and diseases.



Kukupako | Kanakana | Lamprey (*Geotria australis*)
Threatened - Nationally Vulnerable

Banded Kōkopu

Banded kōkopu are usually found in deeply shaded pools or under undercut banks. They can travel far inland due to their ability to jump and "climb" up rocky streams, but cannot pass over dry areas. They catch moths, damselflies, and other flying invertebrates as they land on the surface of the water. They can even jump and catch insects in the air. Banded kōkopu are one of the six species of whitebait and, as such, are an important mahika kai species, but they are rare in Canterbury, Otago, and Southland whitebait catches.



Banded kōkopu (*Galaxias fasciatus*)
At Risk - Naturally Uncommon



Giant Kōkopu

Giant kōkopu are found in wetlands, lakes and forest streams close to the sea. While these fish prefer slow flowing pools and backwaters shaded by plants, they are able to tolerate some urbanisation and have been found in low numbers around the Waipōuri-Waihora Wetland Complex. Giant kōkopu are long-lived with a lifespan of 20 years and they are the largest galaxiid, with some accounts recording lengths over 400 mm. The galaxiid name come from the spotting pattern resembling the galaxy.

Giant kōkopu (*Galaxias argenteus*)
Declining



Healthy Taiari

Healthy Taiari is an Upper Taiari Wai catchment group project, funded by the Ministry of Primary Industries' Integrated Farm Planning Accelerator Fund. Visit us at www.taiariwai.nz.

